

**Evaluation of the
Indianapolis Mayor Sponsored
Charter Schools**

Christel House Academy-West

2nd Year Charter Review

2015-2016 School Year

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OFFICE OF EDUCATION INNOVATION

Office of the Mayor of Indianapolis

SECOND YEAR CHARTER REVIEW

Christel House Academy-West

October 20-21 and November 23, 2015

The Indianapolis Mayor's Office Second Year Charter Review (SYCR) is designed to assess the development of the school as it finishes its second year of operation, and serves as an evaluation of the school as it is establishing the school culture and curricular practices. The Second Year Charter Review Protocol is based on the *Performance Framework*, which is used to determine a school's success relative to a common set of indicators, as well as school-based goals.

Consistent with the Indianapolis Mayor's Office Performance Framework, the following four core questions and sub-questions are examined to determine a school's success:

Is the educational program a success?

- 1.1. *Is the school's academic performance meeting state expectation, as measured by Indiana's accountability system?*
- 1.2. *Are students making sufficient and adequate gains, as measured by the Indiana Growth model?*
- 1.3. *Does the school demonstrate that students are improving, the longer they are enrolled at the school?*
- 1.4. *Is the school providing an equitable education to students of all races and socioeconomic backgrounds?*
- 1.5. *Is the school's attendance rate strong?*
- 1.6. *Is the school outperforming schools that the students would have been assigned to attend?*
- 1.7. *Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?*

Is the organization in sound fiscal health?

- 2.1. *Short term Health: Does the school demonstrate the ability to pay its obligations in the next 12 months?*
- 2.2. *Long term Health: Does the organization demonstrate long term financial health?*
- 2.3. *Does the organization demonstrate it has adequate financial management and systems?*

Is the organization effective and well-run?

- 3.1. *Is the school leader strong in his or her academic and organizational leadership?*
- 3.2. *Does the school satisfactorily comply with all its organizational structure and governance obligations?*
- 3.3. *Is the school's board active, knowledgeable and abiding by appropriate policies, systems and processes in its oversight?*
- 3.4. *Does the school's board work to foster a school environment that is viable and effective?*
- 3.5. *Does the school comply with applicable laws, regulations and provision of the charter agreement relating to the safety and security of the facility?*

Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

- 4.1. *Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?*
- 4.2. *Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?*
- 4.3. *For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?*
- 4.4. *Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?*
- 4.5. *Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?*
- 4.6. *Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?*
- 4.7. *Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?*
- 4.8. *Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?*
- 4.9 *Is the school properly maintaining special education files for its special needs students?*
- 4.10 *Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as Second Language (ESL) students?*

COMPLETION OF THE SECOND YEAR CHARTER REVIEW

As part of its oversight of charter schools, the Office of Education Innovation of the Mayor of Indianapolis has authorized Research & Evaluation Resources (RER) to conduct site visits of schools in their second year of operation. The purpose is to present the school and the Office of Education Innovation a professional judgment on conditions and practices at the school, which are best provided through an external perspective. This report uses multiple sources of evidence to understand the school's performance. Evidence collection begins with a review of key documents and continues on-site through additional document review, classroom visits and interviews with any number of stakeholders. Findings provided by the site visits can be used to celebrate what the school is doing well and prioritize its areas for improvement in preparation for renewal. It is the task of the site visit team to report on the following pre-identified aspects of the *Performance Framework* and to assist the Office of Education Innovation in its completion of the SYCR Protocol: *Responses to sub-questions 4.1- 4.10 of Core Question 4.*

The outcome of this review will provide the school with a written report that includes a judgment and supporting evidence on various aspects of the school, based on a of indicators¹ developed for each of the four core questions and sub-questions in the *Performance Framework*. The assessment system utilizes the following judgments:

Does not meet standard

Approaching standard

Meets standard

¹ Rubric indicators are subject to revision by the OEI.

Christel House Academy-West

Christel House Academy-West is a replication of the highly successful Christel House Academy-South, which was one of the first schools granted a charter by the Mayor of Indianapolis. Like its predecessor on the south side of Indianapolis, the mission of Christel House Academy-West (CHA-West) is to be an agent of transformation for traditionally underserved and at-risk students. With the goal of breaking the generational cycle of poverty by providing young people with the academic and life skills necessary to achieve success in the 21st Century, Christel House Academy-West will be expanding the work of Christel House Academy-South. As noted in their application for replication, the Christel House Academy model works by providing (1) high quality and challenging academic curriculum; (2) on-site mental health and social services, (3) outreach to parents and families and (4) art, music and extracurricular activities.

Christel House Academy-West received its charter from the Mayor of Indianapolis' Office of Education Innovation in 2013 and opened in August 2014. The leadership of Christel House International, the umbrella organization for all of the Christel House schools, provided the new school with a strong foundation to build upon. CHA-West benefits from the resources available in the Central Office of Christel House Academy, and is implementing the same curriculum as CHA-South. In the 2014-15 academic year, CHA-South made the decision to incorporate the new Indiana standards into instruction by adopting new curriculums for the elementary schools. Both CHA elementary schools now use ReadyGen for Language Arts and Envision for Math. Christel House Academy-West has benefited from the use of a common curriculum across both schools, in that professional development opportunities are available for faculties of both schools to participate in together, allowing the teaching staff to learn from each other as they implement the curriculum.

By far the most effective decision made by Christel House Academy leadership was to begin CHA-West with an inaugural class of Kindergarten, first, and second-grade students, and then adding a grade with each academic year as this original cohort moves up. In this way, the staff at CHA-West have been able to build a culture of high expectations and respect from the first day the school opened. While there is some mobility among students, the majority of the original second grade class are now third-grade students at Christel House Academy-West, and during focus group interviews, noted that they are proud to be the leaders of CHA-West.

The Evaluation Process

Research & Evaluation Resources staff engaged in a number of evidence-collecting activities. The focus of this evaluation was to gauge perceptions of key stakeholders at the school in relation to the areas of the performance framework that are part of the evaluation. RER conducted focus group discussions with students, staff, and parents, as well as interviews with the school administration. These focus groups, interviews and classroom observations for Christel House Academy-West, which is currently grades K-3, were conducted over a 2 day period, October 20-21, 2015. Additional

information was gathered from Carey Dahncke, Chief Academic Officer/Director of Christel House Academy and Sarah Weimer, Head of Curriculum and Instruction on November 23, 2015.

On October 20-21, 2015, one observer conducted classrooms observations during the 2nd year review of Christel House Academy-West. The classroom observer spent 3.5 hours (212 minutes) observing 7 classrooms, 142 students, and 7 teachers. On average, each observation lasted 31 minutes and the observed student to teacher ratio was 20:1. Please see the Christel House Academy-West Observation Summary for a detailed analysis of the observations conducted.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

CHRISTEL HOUSE ACADEMY - WEST

<i>Core Question 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?</i>	<i>Finding</i>
<i>4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.3 For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.9 Is the school properly maintaining special education files for its special needs students?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.10 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as Second Language (ESL) students?</i>	Meets Standard

Standard 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum does not align with the state standards; b) the school does not conduct systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school does not regularly review scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) the sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas does not focus on core (prioritized) learning objectives; e) the staff lacks understanding and/or consensus as to how the curriculum documents and related program materials are used to effectively deliver instruction; f) there is a lack of programs and materials available to deliver the curriculum effectively.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum does not align with the state standards; b) the school does not conduct systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school does not regularly review scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) the sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas does not focus on core (prioritized) learning objectives; e) the staff lacks understanding and/or consensus as to how the curriculum documents and related program materials are used to effectively deliver instruction; f) there is a lack of programs and materials available to deliver the curriculum effectively.
Meets standard	The school: a) curriculum aligns with the state standards; b) conducts systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school regularly reviews scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) has a sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas that is prioritized and focuses on the core learning objectives; e) the staff understands and uniformly uses curriculum documents and related program materials to effectively deliver instruction; f) programs and materials are available to deliver the curriculum effectively.

No significant concerns were found.

Data gathered through classroom observations, focus group interviews and interviews with the school leadership revealed that the curriculum being enacted at Christel House Academy-West is standards-based and aligns with the Indiana State Standards (indicator a). Focus group interviews with the teaching staff, as well as interviews with the Head of Elementary School, Mr. Rick Hunt, and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Sarah Weimer, revealed that the school leadership and teaching staff has successfully adapted the ReadyGen and Envision curriculums to the needs of Christel House Academy-West.

The process of adapting ReadyGen for Language Arts and Envision for Math to the current Indiana State standards was accomplished through a collaboration between Sarah Weimer of Christel House Academy schools, leadership at CHA-West and CHA-South and the teaching staff at both Christel House Academies. The publishers of ReadyGen and Envision have provided Scope and Sequence documents to be used with their textbooks. These documents provide a great deal of information regarding the standards being addressed, Performance Based Assessments, Tasks, strategies for differentiated instruction, core learning objectives, and other useful information and strategies. Using these pacing guides as a foundation, Ms. Weimer and the teaching staff developed a sequence

of topics across grade levels and content areas that are prioritized and focused on core learning objectives (indicator d). Currently at Christel House Academy-West, only the curriculum maps for K-3 are in use.

The Christel House-West teaching staff described the process of adapting the pacing guides to their needs, explaining that as a faculty they engaged in year long planning as part of their professional development. Beginning with the College and Career Ready standards, they performed grade level planning in each topic. Part of the process was adapting "the "I can" statement directly from the Indiana state standards," and supplementing the scope and sequence guides from the Envision and ReadyGen curriculums with material chosen by the teaching staff in order to enhance their students' learning. A specific supplement they are currently using is the New York City school systems supplemental reading materials, chosen because the faculty determined that "the reading part of ReadyGen did not have enough about decoding, and we thought we needed more for our students." The teaching staff noted that they are currently "still building toward vertical articulation across the curriculum, and the overall curriculum mapping is in progress."

Christel House Academy-West has adopted the house system that is in place at Christel House Academy-South, and currently House 1 is kindergarten and first grade, and House 2 is second and third grade. Each house has a lead teacher, who provides additional expertise to the teachers of the house. The leader teachers played a crucial role in the adaptation of the Envision and ReadyGen curriculum, working with Ms. Weimer to pace out the class schedules and to align the new curriculums to the CCR standards. Ms. Weimer also provided additional materials to be used during classroom instruction.

When asked about the use of a structured curriculum, the teaching staff replied that they were encouraged to supplement their instruction with additional materials, noting that "we supplement a lot and we will come up with our own math centers and additional readings," another noted that "Envision is a tool for teachers to use, but we can do things differently." Finally, one teacher commented that "We teach the standards and not the textbook---we don't have to follow the curriculum exactly if we don't want to. I'm not teaching Chapter 1, then Chapter 2....we can do things differently."

An additional example of the teaching staff's ownership of the curriculum was noted above-- the teaching staff believed that ReadyGen was weak in phonics and decoding and asked the school leadership for engaging materials and were provided with the New York City Public Schools supplemental reading series. It was also noted that "I use my own materials when I want to push them further and mesh it with the ReadyGen materials for shared reading." The teaching staff at CHA-West are fully engaging in the process of adapting and improving the curriculum, and have successfully incorporated curriculum documents and related program materials to effectively deliver instruction (indicator e).

Christel House Academy-West has only been in existence for two years, and the process of adding a grade level each year has led to the number of students being comparatively low. Additionally, the

curriculum being used is also relatively new and is still being modified to the needs of Christel House Academy-West students. Consequently, a full scale systematic review of the curriculum has not been needed. The staff at CHA-West have been using student data in the process of fully developing their curriculum, making alterations based on based on student performance (indicator b), and ensuring that all state standards are covered in time for testing (indicator c). Many of these discussion about data occur during their weekly house meetings. An example of using data to address student gaps can be found in the use of DIBELS data to design group interventions, and the use of informal data to design leveled math groups in first grade. Additionally, in order to prepares students for IREAD testing, there has been a focus on contextual cues in fiction and non-fiction in the third grade.

Christel House Academy-West has provided teachers with a great environment within which to teach. All of the classrooms observed contained the programs and materials to deliver the curriculum effectively (indicator f). When asked about the availability of materials, the teaching staff expressed satisfaction with the materials and support provided.

Areas of Strength: Christel House Academy-West has adopted a standards-based curriculum that provides the teaching staff with a wealth of opportunities to develop a strong curriculum that meets the needs of their students.

In collaboration with Christel House Academy leadership, the CHA-West and CHA-South teaching staff are modifying and adapting the Envision and ReadyGen curriculums to the needs of all Christel House Academy students.

Recommendations: When the data becomes available, school leaders are encouraged to use student data to address gaps in the Envision and ReadyGen curriculum to better meet the needs of CHA-West students.

4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the curriculum is implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery possesses the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities possess variety and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) supplies sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices.

No significant concerns were found.

Classroom observations revealed that the curriculum at Christel House Academy is implemented in all (7 out of 7) of classrooms according to its design (indicator a), with all teachers observed followed the provided lesson plan. The lesson plans provided were all of very high quality, with the state standards often provided in the form of learning targets or "I can" statements. The amount of detail varied among the lesson plans, but all of the provided enough detail regarding the state standards being covered or the learning objectives for that day to be useful guiding documents. Many of the lesson plans were extremely detailed and very well done. It was also noted that all of the lesson plans contained core learning objectives which aligned to the state standard being covered for that day.

Classroom observations also revealed that, as delivered, classroom instruction is focused on core learning objectives in 7 out of 7 classrooms observed (indicator b). As noted above, the majority of the lesson plans provided by the teacher who were observed did contain core-learning objectives, and the classroom observations revealed that all of the instructors did deliver a lesson focused on learning objectives. The classroom observations revealed all instructors observed (7 out of 7) gave lessons that posed a challenge to students and possessed the appropriate rigor (indicator c). Differentiated instruction was noted in 5 out of 7 classrooms observed (indicator d).

The teaching staff reported that information from classroom observations was relayed to them soon after the observations occurred, and that they received sufficient feedback on instructional practices (indicator e).

Areas of Strength: Christel House Academy has a strong teaching staff, who present rigorous and challenging content throughout the school.

School leadership conduct frequent classroom observations, and use that data to improve instruction.

Recommendations: Include a section on Lesson Plans that explicitly lists strategies to differentiate instruction in the classroom.

4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are not accurate or useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are not received by classroom teachers in a timely or useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments lack sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is limited frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are not used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are not accurate or useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are not received by classroom teachers in a timely or useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments lack sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is limited frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are not used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.
Meets standard	The school: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are accurate and useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are received by classroom teachers in a timely and useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments have sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is sufficient frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.

No significant concerns were found.

Christel House Academy-West administers standardized and classroom assessments that are accurate and useful measures of established learning standards/objectives (indicator a), and are administered with sufficient frequency to inform instructional decisions effectively (indicator d). Specifically, at the school-wide level, CHA-West administers assessments provided by the Envision curriculum through Pearson's SuccessNet, ISTEP, and IREAD-3. Additional assessments used are the 5 Star Pivot suite of educational assessment. The teaching staff reported that the 5 Star Pivot testing is new this semester, but that they are very happy with the assessments and flexibility in testing it offers, noting that they can choose to administer the assessments that they need at each testing session. The 5 Star Pivot includes an assessment similar to DIBELS, and is administered 3 times a year (indicator d). The change to 5 Star Pivot has been welcomed by the teaching staff, who noted that "the (previous) testing suite took a long time and the assessments weren't valid, but with this we can choose which standards we are covering for each test."

Teachers noted in the focus group that the data is disseminated quickly and presented in a way that is useful for differentiating instruction and determining student weaknesses (indicator b). The testing platform allows teachers to create their own progress monitoring tools, and also allows the examination of data at the level of individual teacher, grade level, and the entire school. Both the teaching and the school leadership were enthusiastic about the possibilities the new assessments provided.

The teaching staff at CHA-West also administer a variety of other informal assessments, that with the 5 Star Pivot assessments, provide the teachers with a sufficient variety of assessments to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities (indicator c). The teachers perform informal and formal assessment over the course of the day, using "do nows," "exit tickets," and "quick checks" as well as quick skills assessments in math and spelling, and for the older students, more traditional tests and quizzes.

Assessment results are used to inform to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum (indicator e), during house meetings and during professional development. Data from formal and informal assessments are aggregated into a "data wall" in the teacher room, and the teachers noted that they may begin using an "electronic data wall," similar to that used at Christel House Academy-South in the future.

Areas of Strength: Christel House Academy-West uses a wide-variety of standardized and classroom based assessments, and disseminate the data quickly and in a useful manner to the teaching staff.

Christel House Academy-West uses standardized assessment data to improve instruction at the school-wide curricular level and also at the student-level.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) hiring processes are not organized to support the success of new staff members; b) inefficient or insufficient deployment of faculty and staff limits instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are not certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) does not relate to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD is not determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is not explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) hiring processes are not organized to support the success of new staff members; b) inefficient or insufficient deployment of faculty and staff limits instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are not certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) does not relate to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD is not determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is not explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) hiring processes are organized and used to support the success of new staff members; b) the school deploys sufficient number of faculty and staff to maximize instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) is related to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD opportunities are determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.

No significant concerns were found.

Christel House Academy-West has have developed consistent hiring practices to ensure that all new hires are fully qualified and have been approved by several members of the CHA management team. New staff members are supported during their first year at Christel House through the assignment of a mentoring teacher to provide support and to discuss any problems or answer any questions that new staff members may have (indicator a). New staff members are also informally observed on a more frequent basis, and have additional coaching opportunities embedded into the 6-week coaching cycle that is available to all Christel House Academy teachers. All teachers at Christel House Academy-West are certified or credentialed in their teaching area, or have the appropriate licensure to teach (indicator c). The teachers are teaching course loads that are manageable, and the various staff members have distinct roles (indicator b). Overall, the staff is deployed to best utilize their skills and training.

Professional development opportunities come from a variety of different sources. Much of the professional development offered at Christel House Academy-West is part of the overall professional development offered by Christel House Academy to all if its network schools. A professional development opportunity that particularly valued by the staff was a "picture walk" in which faculty presented examples of lessons that succeeded, as well as lessons that did not, for review and discussion with their peers. Professional development has also included instruction in the new assessment tools available, the teacher assessment rubric, and the format of the new report cards. Professional development is also in the form of Professional Learning Communities (PLC's), which meet at least 8 days during the school year and for an hour each Wednesday. In addition to

the PLCs, each teacher has an opportunity to work with the Instructional Coach, Debby Nauta. Ms. Nauta uses the coaching sessions as an opportunity to review data at the level of the individual teacher or grade level to determine areas that need to be addressed during professional development. Specifically, Ms. Nauta reviews benchmark assessments, curricular assessments, and/or informal assessment data collected within a lesson/unit with the teacher to improve teaching in the classroom. Based on the data, growth goals are set for individual students or for the class depending on need (indicator e). Data is also used to identify broader areas of concern in student growth. For example, last year Christel House Academy-West leadership identified that fluency in math was impeding student growth and causing students to not reach their achievement goals on the mClass assessment. To address this issue, professional development was provided to teachers in the form of a math fluency workshop/training at Butler University. An additional use of data to inform professional development comes in the form of the Advanced Teacher Initiative, which is a program developed by Christel House Academy leadership to encourage teachers to improve their classroom instruction through the examination of their data, and providing a link between professional development and the demonstrated need for instructional improvement (indicator d).

The evaluation framework currently being implemented at Christel House Academy-West is a combination of the TAP evaluation rubric and RISE (indicator f). The teaching staff reported that the school leadership performs at least one announced and one unannounced formal classroom observations, and frequent informal, or walkthrough, observations. Data from the informal walkthroughs is conveyed to the teacher immediately, while data from the formal classroom observations is conveyed during a post-observation meeting. The teaching staff conveyed that they fully understood the teacher evaluation framework as it has been part of the professional development of the school. They noted that "we have focused on one or two areas of the rubric and I kind of like learning about it--- we break it down and make sure we know what we are being evaluated on."

Areas of Strength: Christel House Academy-West offers a wide variety of professional development opportunities to the teaching staff, both in conjunction with the Christel House Academy network and as an individual school based on the needs of its students.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>both</u> of the following areas: a) significant disagreements exist among stakeholders about the school's mission; b) there is a lack of widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) significant disagreements exist among stakeholders about the school's mission; b) there is a lack of widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.
Meets standard	The school: a) has a mission that is shared by all stakeholders; b) has stakeholders possessing widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.

No significant concerns were found.

The school mission is well understood by all stakeholders at Christel House Academy-West. The teaching staff clearly stated their belief that their mission is to "teach the child as a whole," or to "provide quality teaching to the whole child.. to educate them socially and academically. The staff at Christel House Academy-West are also implementing "CHOW" or cultures and habits of work." As part of CHOW, students set 20 day goals which are monitored and rewarded by the teaching staff, with students receiving grades on CHOW that are determined by a set rubric. The CHOW initiative is part of the culture of Christel House Academy-West, and directly reflects the mission of the school. Another strong theme is the community aspect of CHA-West. One parent noted, "they take care of the families of students as well.. they're here to help the kids and to help the families (indicators a & b).

Areas of Strength: Christel House Academy-West has a compelling mission that is instantiated daily in the life of both schools.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address them: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and/or unproductive.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address it: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and /or unproductive.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the school has clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach possesses high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive and faculty and students are clear about processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are professional and constructive.

No significant concerns were found.

Christel House Academy-West shares a common Family Handbook with the Christel House Academy-South that describes a straightforward incremental discipline policy comprised of Office Referrals, Suspensions and Expulsions. A list of inappropriate behaviors that would result in an Office Referral, as well as behaviors that are punishable by suspensions or expulsions are also clearly described. Consequently, the disciplinary policy has a clearly stated set of behavioral rules that enforce positive behavior (indicator a) and possesses high expectations for student behavior (indicator b). Christel House Academy-West also implements disciplinary procedures that are tailored to the needs of individual students, often employing "break cards" and cool-down spots to encourage students to regulate their own behavior. When necessary, the teaching staff reported that Mr. Hunt is always available to intervene with students and, if necessary, contact parents. The teachers also noted that they were always informed of the outcome of any interventions or conversations with parents.

Interactions between students and faculty were observed to be respectful and supportive (indicator c). Focus group interviews with the teaching staff at Christel House Academy-West revealed that they attribute much of the successful school culture at CHA-West to the decision to grow one grade at a time, thus allowing them to maintain the culture they have developed, as well as the decision to cap third grade at 18 students rather than admit a large number of older students who do not know the CHA-West culture, requiring teachers to "backfill so we don't lose the culture."

An additional strength of the Christel House Academy-West culture is the implementation of CHOW, or Cultures and Habits Of Work. This program employs goal setting and self-monitoring

on the part of the students, and provides an effective framework to support the development of strong and cohesive school culture.

Interactions between Christel House Academy-West teachers and school leadership are professional and constructive (indicator d) with the teaching staff noting that "Rick's door is always open, and I feel comfortable asking Rick for materials I need, or if I have a concern I can bring it to him." It was also noted that Carey Dahncke, Chief Academic Officer/Director of Christel House Academy, is at often at the school having lunch with the teachers, and is open to discussing their concerns during this time.

Areas of Strength: Christel House Academy-West provides students with an easily understood and well-implemented discipline policy.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) there is a lack of active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) school communication is neither timely nor relevant to the parental concerns; c) student academic progress and achievement reports are not clearly reported and/or misunderstood; d) the school's communication methods are not well-designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., not communicating in parents' native languages, communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at inconvenient times for parents).
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) there is a lack of active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) school communication is neither timely nor relevant to the parental concerns; c) student academic progress and achievement reports are not clearly reported and/or misunderstood; d) the school's communication methods are not well-designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., not communicating in parents' native languages, communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at inconvenient times for parents).
Meets standard	The school: a) has active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) utilizes communications that are both timely and relevant to the parental concerns; c) communicates student academic progress and achievement in reports that are understood by parents; d) the school's communication methods are designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., communicating in parents' native languages, not communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at convenient times for parents).

No significant concerns were found.

Christel House Academy-West has active and ongoing communication between the school and parents (indicator a), with the teaching staff using a variety of ways to communicate with parents. These communications take the form of school newsletters, classroom newsletters from each teacher, behavior reports sent home daily or weekly, parent-teacher conferences held four times a year, phone messenger systems, emails, phone calls and face to face discussions. Teachers have also done home visits when needed. All of these communications methods are used throughout the school year (indicator b). The teachers noted that the content of communication with parents are substantive and valuable for both teachers and parents.

Christel House Academy-West communicate student academic progress and achievement in reports that are understood by parents through parent/teacher conferences in which teachers explain grades and test results from Acuity and ISTEP. Additionally, progress reports are sent home at a minimum of once per quarter and some teachers choose to communicate with parents more frequently, providing parent with a steady flow of information.

The school's communication methods are designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (indicator d), with many school materials translated into Spanish. Further, teachers offer extended times to meet with parents during conference week, or will come into school early, schedule meetings during school hours and after hours.

Focus group meetings with parents revealed that they are happy with the quality and amount of communication provided by Christel House Academy-West. They noted that the teaching staff

communicates with them using a variety of methods, including email, phone calls and conversations during drop-off and pick-up.

Areas of Strength: Christel House Academy-West staff are friendly and responsive to parents, providing them with a information about their students through a variety of different modes of communication.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.9. Do the school's special education files demonstrate that it is in legal compliance and is moving towards best practice?	
Does not meet standard	The school's special education files present concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) do not adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; b) each need identified within the IEP does not have a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; c) all goals are not rigorous or based on state or national learning standards; d) evidence does not demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student developed; e) specifically designed curriculum is not outlined.
Approaching standard	The school's special education files present concerns in <u>one</u> or more of the following areas: a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) do not adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; b) each need identified within the IEP does not have a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; c) all goals are not rigorous or based on state or national learning standards; d) evidence does not demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student developed; e) specifically designed curriculum is not outlined.
Meets standard	<u>All of the following are evident in the school's special education files:</u> a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; b) each need identified within the IEP has a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; c) each goal is rigorous and is based on state and national learning standards; d) explicit evidence exists to demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student develops; e) specifically designed curriculum is outlined.

Christel House Academy West & Christel House DORS South: Fall, 2015

Special Education Audit

Azure DS Angelov, Ph.D.

This report compiles a review of all practices and procedures specific to special education services at Christel House Academy West & Christel House DORS South (CHA). The results of this evaluation are based on the following pieces of data collected onsite: classroom observations, review of internal processes and procedural manuals, interviews with general education and special education staff, interviews with students with IEPs, review of 25% of IEPs housed at CHA, DOE data bases, CHA website, and follow up interviews with eligible families of students with IEPs at CHA.

All of the following are evident in the school's special education files: (a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; (b) each need identified within the IEP has a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; (c) each goal is rigorous and is based on state and national learning standards; (d) explicit evidence exists to demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student develops; (e) specifically designed curriculum is outlined.

Both CHA sites are moving forward in providing high quality special education services. Currently, CHA DORS has an extremely small number of students with IEPs and CHA South has a growing population. Students with IEPs are making academic growth and IEP files are legally compliant. Currently, CHA meets all the indicators outlined in standard 4.9.

4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?	
Does not meet standard	The school is <u>not</u> fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires substantial improvement in order to achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Approaching standard	The school is not yet completely fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires <i>some</i> (but not considerable) improvement to fully achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Meets standard	The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, as indicated by conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.

No significant concerns were found.

Ms. Lindie Ludlow is the ESL coordinator for Christel House Academy-West. Ms. Ludlow is very knowledgeable in current legislation regarding the education of ESL students and is familiar with Indiana's English Language Proficiency Standards. Ms. Ludlow reported that she has participated in professional development opportunities relating to effective best practices in the field of ESL through the Indiana Department of Education in ESL education, as well as several webinars on the topic.

Ms. Ludlow is also very familiar with the Indiana Department of Education Office of English Language Learning & Migrant Education Guidelines to Satisfy Legal Requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Ms. Meyers employs effective ESL practices to ensure that Christel House Academy-West is in compliance with these standards. Christel House Academy-West students are provided with both push-in and pull-out services, and supports and services are provided to help with their socio-emotional adjustments as well (indicator a).

Ms. Ludlow also ensures that relationships with students, parents and external providers are well-managed and comply with the law (indicator b). As noted above, Ms. Ludlow provides services that comply with Indiana state law, as well as with the standards and best practices required by the Indiana Department of Education.

Appendix A:

Indianapolis Charter School Classroom Observation Summary

On October 20-21, 2015, one observer conducted classrooms observations during the 2nd year review of Christel House Academy-West. The classroom observer spent 3.5 hours (212 minutes) observing 7 classrooms, 142 students, and 7 teachers. On average, each observation lasted 31 minutes and the observed student to teacher ratio was 20:1.

Classroom Environment

100% (7/7) had posted objectives. 14% (1/7) had posted state standards. 100% (7/7) used critical vocabulary. 100% (7/7) had challenging content. 100% (7/7) exhibited differentiation. 100% (7/7) of the instruction observed built on prior knowledge.

Learning Environment

The observers categorized observed learning experiences into four main categories. 100% (7/7) of observed activities included Remember/Understand Activities. 100% (7/7) included Apply/Perform Activities. 0% (0/7) included Analyze/Evaluate Activities. 0% (0/7) included Create/Design Activities. 0% (0/7) of activities were found to be ineffective.

100% (7/7) of classrooms contained rich print materials. 57% (4/7) showed examples of exemplary work. 100% (7/7) displayed a daily schedule. 100% (7/7) had posted behavior expectations. 0% (0/7) had culturally relevant materials.

Behavior Management

The site team observed proactive and reactive techniques. The site team recorded 5 (71%) classrooms using proactive discipline. 7 (100%) classrooms using reactive discipline were recorded. Student engagement was fairly consistent. Please see the table below.

Site Visit Classroom Observations

Topic of Lesson	
Read Aloud	Photosynthesis
Science Writing	Reading Comprehension
Great Than/Equal To	New Vocabulary
Reading Comprehension	

Proportion of Students Engaged During:	All		Most		Half		Few		None	
	#	% Total	#	% Total	#	% Total	#	% Total	#	% Total
First Interval	6	86%	1	14%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Second Interval	5	71%	2	29%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Third Interval	5	71%	2	29%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%